United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Public Affairs
Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3590
Illinois, Indiana
Michigan, Minnesota
Ohio, Wisconsin

U.S. EPA Answers Questions About the Skinner Landfill Superfund Site

West Chester, Ohio **June 2000**

This Fact Sheet Will Tell You About:

- When the cleanup will start.
- How the Skinner Landfill will be cleaned up.
- How to get more information.

The Skinner Landfill Superfund Site is located one-half mile south of the intersection of I-75 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road in West Chester, Ohio. It is bordered on the south by the East Fork of Mill Creek, on the east by railroad tracks, on the west by Cincinnati-Dayton Road, and on the north by wooded land.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) representatives interviewed local residents and officials in early April about the Skinner Landfill Superfund Site to find out their concerns. During the interviews, several questions were repeatedly asked - here are the answers to those questions.

What is the timeframe for the cleanup?

In late May, a legal agreement, called a consent decree, outlining the terms of the cleanup between U.S. EPA and the parties considered potentially responsible for contamination at the site was filed in federal court. The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) will hold a 30-day public comment period on the consent decree. The comment period will be announced by DOJ in the "Federal Register." Upon conclusion of the comment period, the final consent decree will be entered into federal court record. This legal process must be completed before the cleanup can begin. The cleanup could start in late summer, or spring 2001 (when the construction season begins).

What will the cleanup involve?

The cleanup process will begin with project initiation and mobilization which involves bringing in trailers to serve as mobile offices and connecting phone lines and electricity. Trees and bushes will also be removed and the land will be cleared to prepare for a cap to be installed on top of the landfill. In addition, monitoring wells will be constructed.

A trench will then be installed downgradient of the landfill. The trench will intercept ground water as it flows toward the East Fork of Mill Creek. The trench will have three wells that will pump the ground water to a sewer which will connect to a publicly owned treatment works (POTW).

Finally, the cap will be installed. The cap will consist of a synthetic clay layer, a drainage layer, and a layer of topsoil and grass. The purpose of the cap is to keep rain, snow, etc. from getting into the landfill and potentially carrying contaminants down through the soil and into the ground water.

A dumpster sits on the Skinner Landfill Site.

Can the cleanup be started after school has ended?

Construction activities that might cause the most waste and soil disturbance will be done during the summer months when school is not in session.

Is there an emergency plan in place to protect the school children and nearby residents? If so, what does it consist of?

Yes, an emergency plan (called a contingency plan) has been developed in cooperation with local officials. The plan outlines who will be contacted in the event of an emergency, how they will be contacted, and what action(s) might be taken. If there is any need to take emergency action, the police or fire departments will notify area residents and businesses.

What type of monitoring will be done, and how often?

Air monitoring will be done continuously during excavation and earth-moving activities at the site. Samples will be taken at a location downwind of the site at the edge of the work area and at a location off site near Union Elementary School. An upwind location will also be monitored to determine the general air quality in the area. Daily readings will be taken.

Ground-water monitoring will begin after construction of the cleanup (trench, cap, etc.) is complete. The monitoring will then continue for the next 30 years. Initially, ground-water sampling will be done quarterly.

How has the Record of Decision (ROD), outlining U.S. EPA's cleanup plan, been changed and/or modified since it was signed in 1993?

The ROD has not been changed. Flexibility is generally built into a cleanup decision if it is later determined that a certain technology is inappropriate or if another technology is later found to provide the same level of protection. An investigation was done in 1995 to determine if the technology U.S. EPA planned to use to remove and treat gases in the soil was feasible at the Skinner Site. The ROD stated that Soil Vapor Extraction (SVE) would be used if it proved to be feasible. Based on the results of the investigation, U.S. EPA concluded that SVE would not work at the Skinner Site. In addition, upon further discussion, U.S. EPA agreed that synthetic materials could be used for the cap in place of clay as long as it is just as protective as clay.

The upgradient slurry wall is still a part of the cleanup. After installation of the cap, it is possible that ground-water levels will drop. If after two years of ground-water monitoring, results show that the water table has dropped below the waste under the cap, then an upgradient slurry wall will not be required. If the information shows that water levels have not dropped below the waste under the cap, then an upgradient slurry wall will be required.

Why is the cleanup cheaper than originally projected?

The original estimated cost of $16 million included the cost of the treatment of the gases in the soil through SVE (see question "How has the ROD outlining U.S. EPA's cleanup plan been changed and/or modified since it was signed in 1993?"). Since SVE will not be used at the site, the cost will now be less. Pre-treatment of ground water before it was sent to a POTW or discharged to the East Fork of Mill Creek was also included in the original cost estimate. In addition, since U.S. EPA agreed that a synthetic liner would be just as protective as the clay layer in the cap described in the 1993 ROD, the cost will again be less. It is now estimated that the cost will be $10 million. It is important to note that the most expensive cleanup is not always the best cleanup. If a cleanup can be done at a lower cost and still meet U.S. EPA's and Ohio EPA's goals for cleanup of a site, then it is generally acceptable to U.S. EPA.

Who will be overseeing the work being done by the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) at the site?

U.S. EPA has hired a contractor to oversee work at the site. An individual from this company will be at the site an average of two to three days a week. In addition, U.S. EPA and Ohio EPA representatives will also be on site every two weeks to ensure that all aspects of the cleanup are properly implemented.

What is the soil comprised of underneath the landfill? Can contaminants get into the ground water?

The soil beneath the site is comprised of layers of sand and gravel, silt (a material with grains in between the size of sand and clay), and clay-like soil. The thickness, composition, and permeability (the ease by which liquids or gases can move through the soil) varies greatly over the site. Some contaminants, including commonly used solvents such as benzene, chloroform, and trichloroethene have already been detected in the ground water near the former waste lagoon area.

How will the ground water be cleaned up?

The ground water will be pumped to a sewer and treated in a POTW.

Has a health assessment been done?

Yes, a health assessment was done in 1993 by the Ohio Department of Health in cooperation with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). The health assessment evaluated the information collected during previous investigations, examined the potential ways by which people off site could be exposed to contaminants from the site, and whether or not there was a potential health risk to people off site. The health assessment concluded that there was no evidence that anyone off site was currently being exposed to contaminants at levels that would pose a public health concern. A copy of this assessment is available for review at the Township Administration Building.

Who is paying for the cleanup?

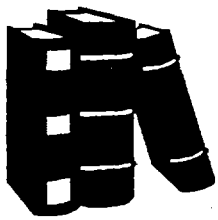
A group of the parties considered potentially responsible for contamination at the site (referred to as PRPs) have signed a legal agreement called a consent decree agreeing to conduct and pay for the cleanup. This group consists primarily of 13 companies and the site owners. An additional 48 companies and five municipalities have agreed to pay a smaller portion of the cleanup.

For More Information

You may review detailed information about the Skinner Landfill Superfund Site at the information repositories. The repositories are located at:

West Chester Public Library
7900 Cox Road
West Chester, OH

Union Township*
Administration Building
9113 Cincinnati-Dayton Road
West Chester, OH



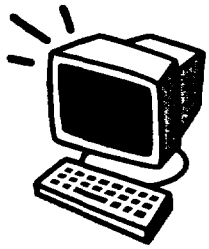
* As of June 28, 2000, the Township will officially be called West Chester Township.

Web Site

This and additional updates can also be found on the following web site:

www.epa.gov/region5/sites/

Scroll through the list to find Skinner Landfill Superfund Site.



Contact Names

The names, addresses, and phone numbers of U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA, and the Ohio Department of Health officials working on the Skinner Landfill Site are listed on the back page of this fact sheet.

Contact Information

Susan Pastor
Community Involvement Coordinator
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
U.S. EPA Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3590
Phone: (312) 353-1325 or
(800) 621-8431 ext. 31325
Fax: (312) 353-1155
Email: pastor.susan@epa.gov

Scott Hansen
Remedial Project Manager
Office of Superfund (SR-6J)
U.S. EPA Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3590
Phone: (312) 886-1999
(800) 621-8431 ext. 61999
Fax: (312) 353-5541
Email: hansen.scott@epa.gov

Chuck Mellon
Site Coordinator
Division of Emergency and Remedial Response
Ohio EPA
401 East Fifth Street
Dayton, OH 45402
Phone: (937) 285-6056
Fax: (937) 285-6404
Email: chuck.mellon@epa.state.oh.us

Bob Frey, Ph.D.
Geologist
Bureau of Environmental Health and Toxicology
Ohio Department of Health
246 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43266-0588
Phone: (614) 644-6447
Fax: (614) 644-7740
Email: rfrey@gw.odh.state.oh.us

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

SCOTT HANSEN
REMEDIAL PROJECT MANAGER
OFFICE OF SUPERFUND (SR-6J)
U.S. EPA REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BLVD.
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

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